

# SPEAKING OUT AGAINST ADMINISTRATION'S RECORD IN COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. MAJETTE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MAJETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out against this administration's deplorable record in combating violence against women. This administration has shown a very disappointing tendency to ignore the plight of mistreated women, both at home and abroad.

Through actions taken by the President's cabinet, such as Attorney General Ashcroft's refusal to grant asylum to a battered Guatemalan woman, and the President's widespread cuts to domestic violence programs, this administration has much to answer for in its neglect of battered women.

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It is, therefore, all the more important for Congress to remain vigilant and to protect our sisters all over the world from those who would mistreat them.

The American Medical Association estimates that over 4 million women are victims of severe assaults by boyfriends and husbands each year, and about one out of every 4 women is likely to be abused by a partner in her lifetime. In 85 percent of reported domestic violence cases, the victim is female.

Domestic violence against women is clearly an issue that our government must address head-on.

It saddens me to think that millions of women continue to be abused each year, while this administration sits idly by, taking no initiative and, in some cases, decreasing resources available to battered women.

It would shock the conscience of this Nation to know that this administration has placed individuals hostile to women's interests on expert advisory committees, including those responsible for providing advice on domestic violence and reproductive health. It simply reveals a disregard for the National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women to appoint members to this body who represent organizations that have outspokenly criticized the Violence Against Women Act. Yet that is exactly what this administration has done.

In addition, the President has refused to include protections for battered women in the marriage proposal programs that are integral to his welfare proposal, despite the risk that poor women could be pressured to remain in abusive relationships.

Finally, this administration has proposed funding emergency shelters, crisis hotlines, and other domestic violence intervention services at 26 percent below authorized levels. I am upset by all of these disturbing trends, but the last of them hits close to home.

In the district that I represent, in DeKalb County, Georgia, there is a

very successful domestic violence intervention center, the Women's Resource Center to End Domestic Violence. The Women's Resource Center's development has truly been a community effort. Established in 1986 by DeKalb County, the center was originally run by one part-time advocate who led support groups. Now, this center runs nine successful programs, including community education and advocacy, providing free legal services, and a 32-person occupancy emergency shelter. So what message is this administration sending to the Women's Resource Center when it refuses to fully fund such an organization and others like it around the country?

As a former judge, I have seen the damage that domestic violence can cause to women and their children, and that is damage to our community and our future.

In Congress, we can and must do more to ensure that local law enforcement can expeditiously deal with domestic violence. This is why I have cosponsored, and I call on my colleagues to support, the Domestic Violence Courts Assistance Act, which would provide the resources necessary for municipal court systems to develop and establish specialized domestic violence courts. I also urge my colleagues to support the Domestic Violence Screening, Treatment, and Prevention Act. This legislation would establish family violence research and education centers to study and disseminate information on family violence. These centers would then act as a critical support for local community domestic violence intervention centers.

When we read the frightening statistics that illuminate the severity of this problem, how can we not be appalled? We are here as representatives of the American people, representatives of these very women; and what have we done as a Congress to help them? We have the opportunity to create better laws to aid them, yet precious little legislation has been passed. We hold the purse strings of the Federal Government, yet we have not provided an adequate level of funding to supply the resources they need to escape their abusive relationships and lead safe lives. It is past time for this administration and this Congress to make a dedicated effort to relieve their suffering. It is never too late.

## 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GERLACH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure once again to address the U.S. House of Representatives and the American people and also Members of the Congress. I just want to first say that as my colleagues know, every week, the 30-Something Working

Group, under the leadership of the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the Democratic leader, we come to the floor to address the House and the American people to share with them what is going on that is good for young people in America, young working people and families, and also what is not going so well, and come with not only constructive ways that we can make things better for Americans throughout this great country of ours, but also make sure that we point out issues that may harm them in the future or that will harm them.

Tonight, we have the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) and also the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), who are my partners in this effort. I would be remiss if I did not, number one, say that it is a pleasure being here with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) again. One more week, we made it, another week in America, and also the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ), who is from the great State of California and who has so much to contribute to our dialogue.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I think today, with the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ), there is a lot more class in this Chamber with her here as opposed to just the gentleman from Florida and me.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of Americans who are just holding on to their clicker right now to hear exactly what she has to say and how she says it. I know that the gentlewoman from California has another engagement, and we definitely want to hear from her.

First, I want to just share a few things as an update real quick. We still have the voter suppression issue that is alive and well in America. We have been getting the vote out through the Rock the Vote effort and also a lot of other folks who are out there, making things happen, sharing with young people who are going to be on college campuses this fall, that they can register where they are going to school, whether it be community college or wherever. So we ask them to go do Rock the Vote because we still have a problem with supervisors telling people even in summer terms that they cannot register.

Once again, in 1975, the Supreme Court spoke to that issue saying, you can vote when you go to school so that your voice can be heard in this upcoming election. We have other issues that we will touch on throughout the hour.

Mr. Speaker, I will now yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) to please share with us some of the issues that are important to her. I know the gentlewoman will talk about some news dealing with issues facing young people here in America today.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I would join my colleagues a little more often if they